TOMB OF DRACULA

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

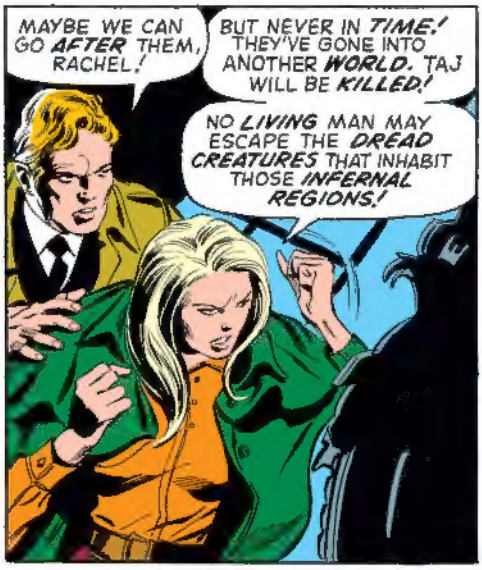
20¢ 5 NOV 02143

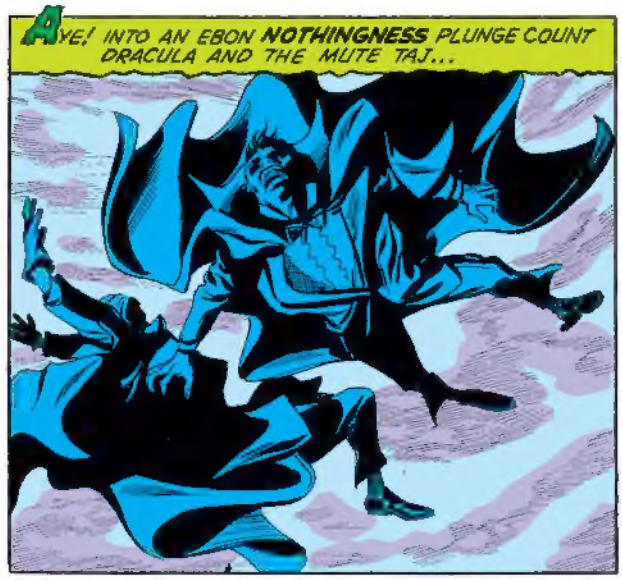
THE TOMB OF DRACULA™

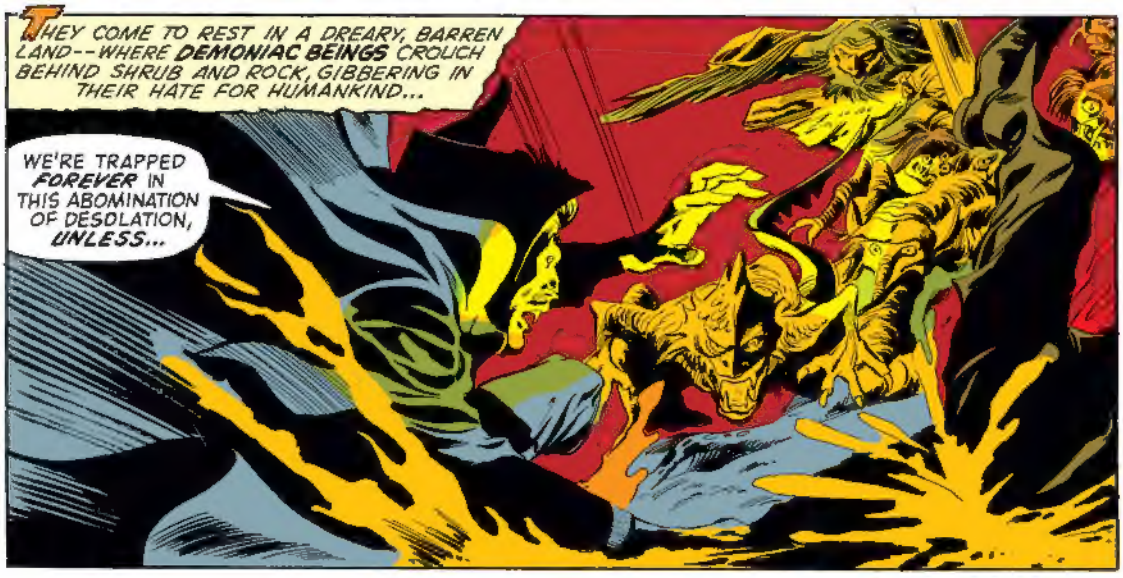
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

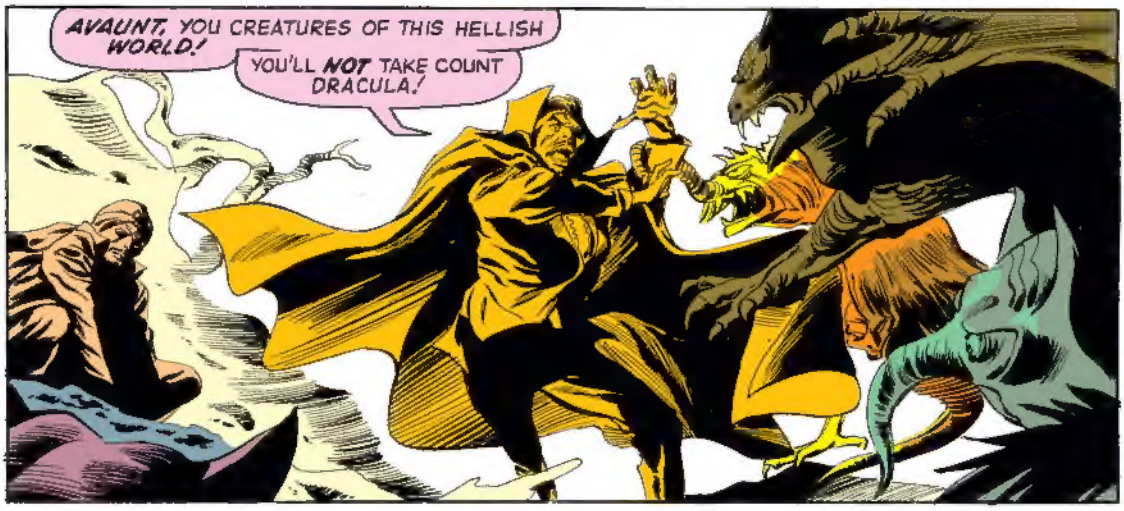
TO SLAY A VAMPIRE!

TOMB OF DRACULA!™


MAYBE WE CAN GO AFTER THEM, RACHEL!
BUT NEVER IN TIME! THEY'VE GONE INTO ANOTHER WORLD. TAJ WILL BE KILLED!
NO LIVING MAN MAY ESCAPE THE DREAD CREATURES THAT INHABIT THOSE INFERNAL REGIONS!


AYE! INTO AN EBON NOTHINGNESS PLUNGE COUNT DRACULA AND THE MUTE TAJ...


THEY COME TO REST IN A DREARY, BARREN LAND--WHERE DEMONIAC BEINGS CROUCH BEHIND SHRUB AND ROCK, GIBBERING IN THEIR HATE FOR HUMANKIND...
WE'RE TRAPPED FOREVER IN THIS ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION, UNLESS...


AVAUNT, YOU CREATURES OF THIS HELLISH WORLD!
YOU'LL NOT TAKE COUNT DRACULA!

I AM SUPREME! YOU'LL NEVER FEAST ON MY BONES, NOR BEND THEM TO YOUR ETERNAL TORMENTS.
BY BEELZEBUB AND SATHANUS WHOM YOU SERVE--BE OFF!

AYE, TAKE THE MUTE! DO WITH HIM WHAT YOU WILL, UNTIL HE FINDS TONGUE TO SCREAM FOR MERCY.
BUT ME...YOU TOUCH NOT!

ILSA STRANGWAY SAID THAT DEMONS MADE THE BLACK MIRROR THROUGH WHICH WE FELL!
IF SO, THERE MAY BE MORE SUCH MIRRORS IN THESE HELL-HAUNTED LANDS!
IF THEY EXIST, I'LL SEARCH THEM OUT--AND FLEE THIS PLACE!

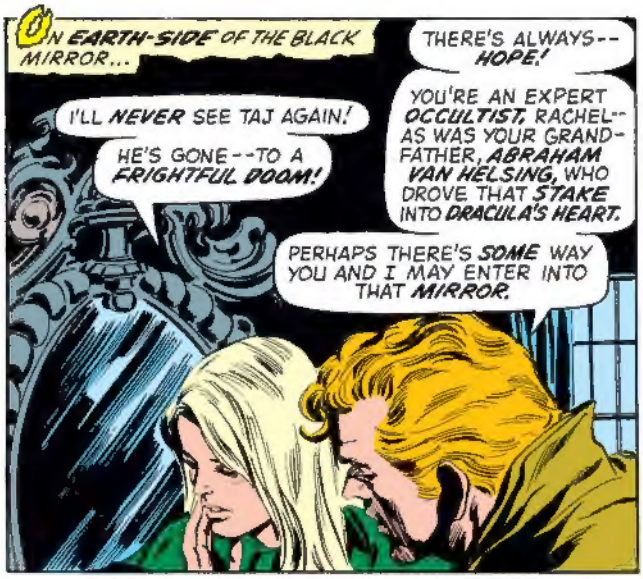
AND YET...AND YET...MY SEARCH WILL TAKE TIME!
WITHOUT THAT FOOD FOR WHICH MY NATURE HUNGERS--I MAY WEAKEN, GROW HELPLESS!

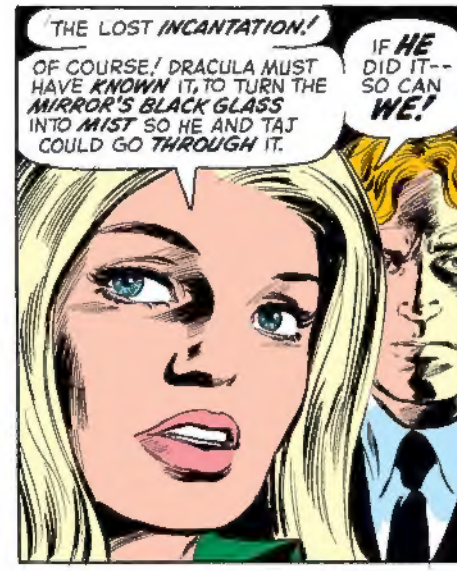
TAJ IS THE ONLY THING IN THESE BARREN WASTES ON WHICH I CAN FEAST! I MUST SAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE MY OWN!
BE OFF, YOU FOUL FIENDS OF THESE NETHER WORLDS! HE BELONGS--TO ME!

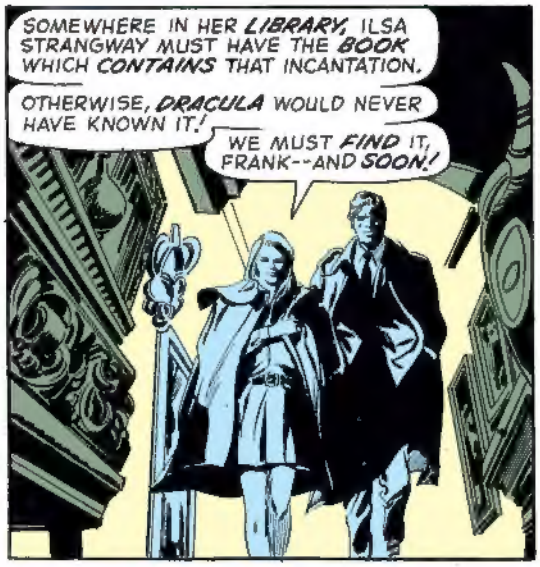
I'LL SAVE YOU, TAJ--FOR YOU ARE MINE, NOW!

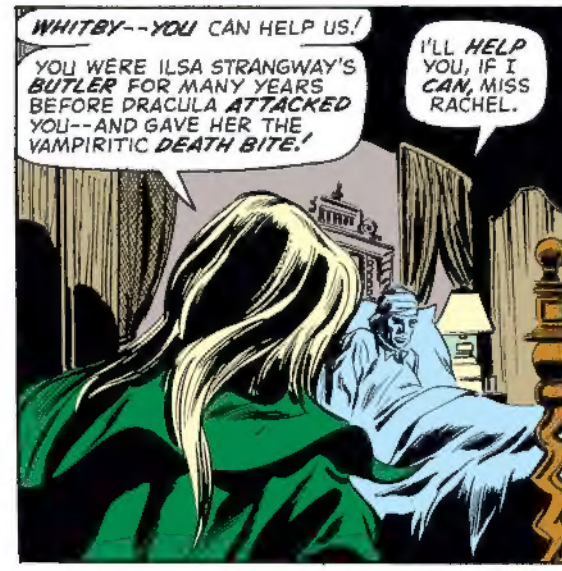
AWAY FROM HIM!

LET GO YOUR CLAWS, YOUR FANGS!

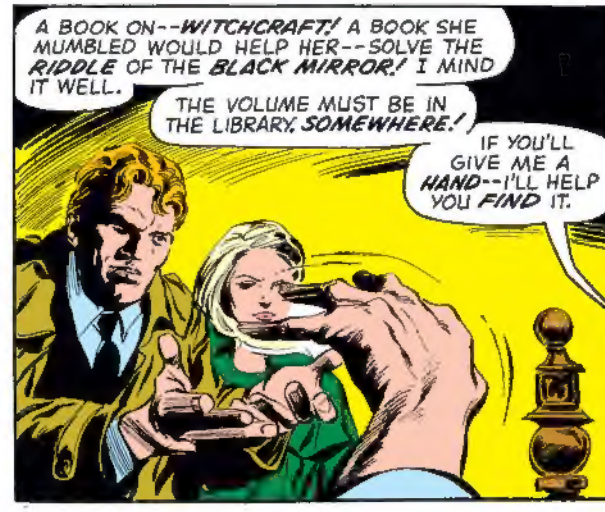

ON EARTH-SIDE OF THE BLACK MIRROR...
I'LL NEVER SEE TAJ AGAIN!
HE'S GONE--TO A FRIGHTFUL DOOM!
THERE'S ALWAYS--HOPE!
YOU'RE AN EXPERT OCCULTIST, RACHEL--AS WAS YOUR GRANDFATHER, ABRAHAM VAN HELSING, WHO DROVE THAT STAKE INTO DRACULA'S HEART.
PERHAPS THERE'S SOME WAY YOU AND I MAY ENTER INTO THAT MIRROR.

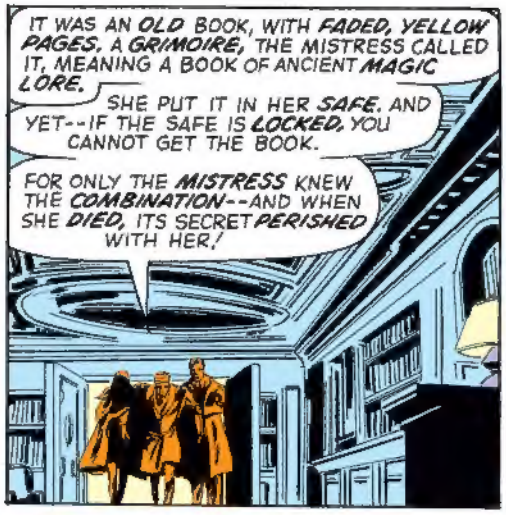

THE LOST INCANTATION!
OF COURSE! DRACULA MUST HAVE KNOWN IT, TO TURN THE MIRROR'S BLACK GLASS INTO MIST SO HE AND TAJ COULD GO THROUGH IT.
IF HE DID IT--SO CAN WE!


SOMEWHERE IN HER LIBRARY, ILSA STRANGWAY MUST HAVE THE BOOK WHICH CONTAINS THAT INCANTATION.
OTHERWISE, DRACULA WOULD NEVER HAVE KNOWN IT!
WE MUST FIND IT, FRANK--AND SOON!

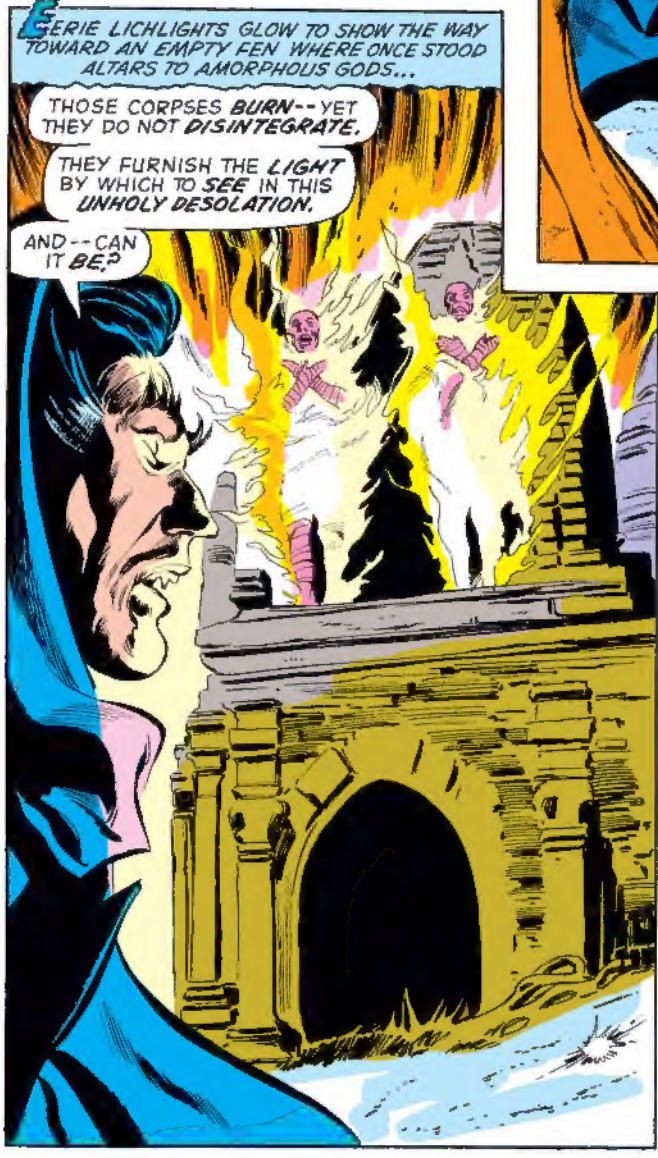

WHITBY--YOU CAN HELP US!
YOU WERE ILSA STRANGWAY'S BUTLER FOR MANY YEARS BEFORE DRACULA ATTACKED YOU--AND GAVE HER THE VAMPIRITIC DEATH BITE!
I'LL HELP YOU, IF I CAN, MISS RACHEL.

I MIND THE MIRROR, YES. AND THE DAY THE LATE MISTRESS BOUGHT IT.
NOW I COME TO THINK OF IT, I RECALL ANOTHER DAY WHEN SHE CAME HOME FROM THE OLD BOOKSHOPS--VERY EXCITED.
SHE HAD A BOOK CLUTCHED UNDER AN ARM...

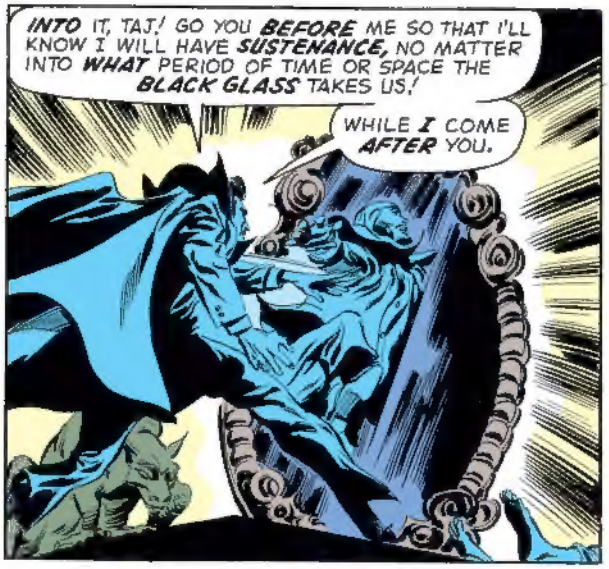

A BOOK ON--WITCHCRAFT! A BOOK SHE MUMBLED WOULD HELP HER--SOLVE THE RIDDLE OF THE BLACK MIRROR! I MIND IT WELL.
THE VOLUME MUST BE IN THE LIBRARY, SOMEWHERE!
IF YOU'LL GIVE ME A HAND--I'LL HELP YOU FIND IT.

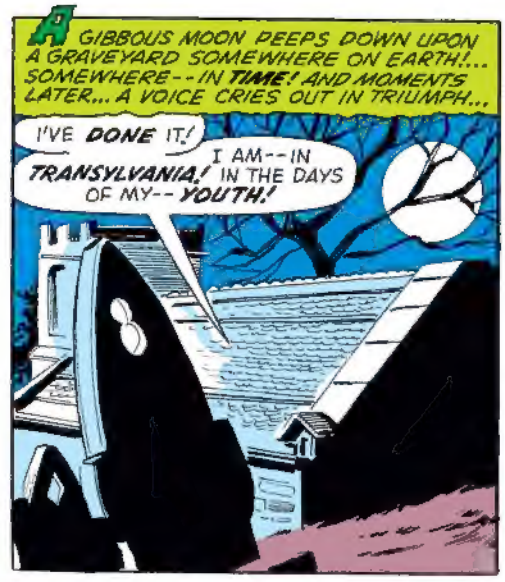

IT WAS AN OLD BOOK, WITH FADED, YELLOW PAGES. A GRIMOIRE, THE MISTRESS CALLED IT, MEANING A BOOK OF ANCIENT MAGIC LORE.
SHE PUT IT IN HER SAFE. AND YET--IF THE SAFE IS LOCKED, YOU CANNOT GET THE BOOK.
FOR ONLY THE MISTRESS KNEW THE COMBINATION--AND WHEN SHE DIED, ITS SECRET PERISHED WITH HER!

THE SILVERY PATHWAY STRETCHES PAST STRANGE AND UNREAL RUINS OF THE DEMON WORLD...
...PAST DEAD POOLS WHERE BONES LIE TWISTED IN ETERNAL TORMENT, WHERE LIVING FUNGI GROPE BLINDLY FOR LIVING FLESH...
NOWHERE IS THERE SIGHT OR EVEN HINT OF A BLACK MIRROR!
I'M NOT EVEN SURE ANOTHER--EXISTS!


EERIE LICHLIGHTS GLOW TO SHOW THE WAY TOWARD AN EMPTY FEN WHERE ONCE STOOD ALTARS TO AMORPHOUS GODS...
THOSE CORPSES BURN--YET THEY DO NOT DISINTEGRATE.
THEY FURNISH THE LIGHT BY WHICH TO SEE IN THIS UNHOLY DESOLATION.
AND--CAN IT BE?

IT IS! REJOICE, MUTE TAJ--WE'VE FOUND A MIRROR.
I CANNOT TELL WHERE IT WILL TAKE US--BUT WE MUST CHANCE THE UNKNOWN--WE MUST!


INTO IT, TAJ! GO YOU BEFORE ME SO THAT I'LL KNOW I WILL HAVE SUSTENANCE, NO MATTER INTO WHAT PERIOD OF TIME OR SPACE THE BLACK GLASS TAKES US!
WHILE I COME AFTER YOU.

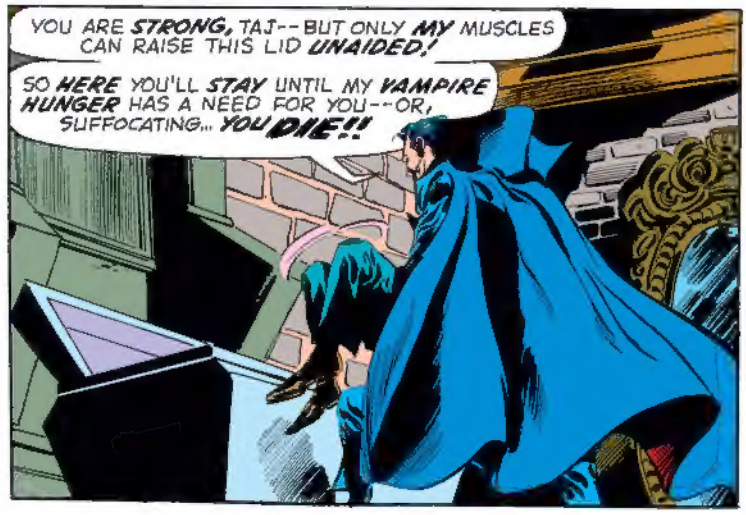

A GIBBOUS MOON PEEPS DOWN UPON A GRAVEYARD SOMEWHERE ON EARTH!... SOMEWHERE--IN TIME! AND MOMENTS LATER... A VOICE CRIES OUT IN TRIUMPH...
I'VE DONE IT!
I AM--IN TRANSYLVANIA! IN THE DAYS OF MY--YOUTH!

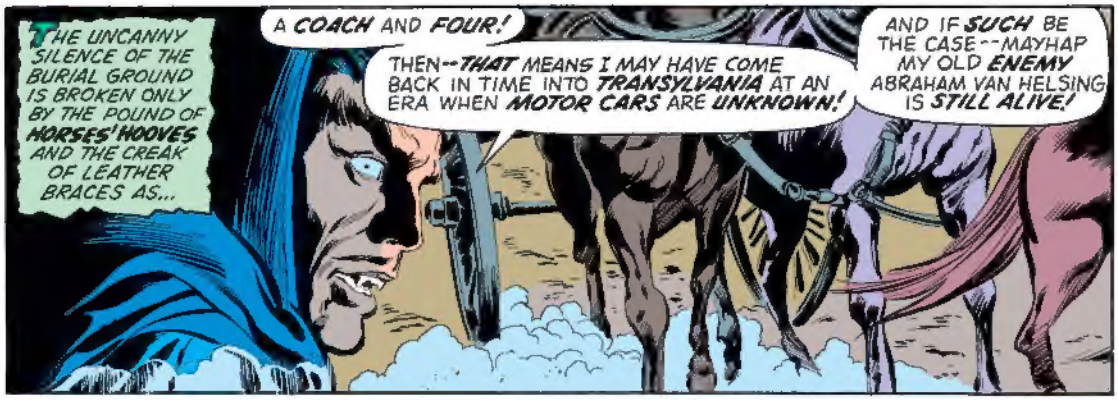
NOW INDEED SHALL I BRING DEATH--TO A VAMPIRE SLAYER!
VAN HELSING

BACK... BACK... BACK INTO TIME ITSELF TRAVEL THE MIRROR VOYAGERS, UNTIL...
I KNOW THIS MARBLE COFFIN, THIS SARCOPHAGUS!
IT'S IN THAT LITTLE GRAVEYARD IN TRANSYLVANIA WHERE MY OWN ANCESTORS LIE BURIED.
BUT--WHAT YEAR IS IT?

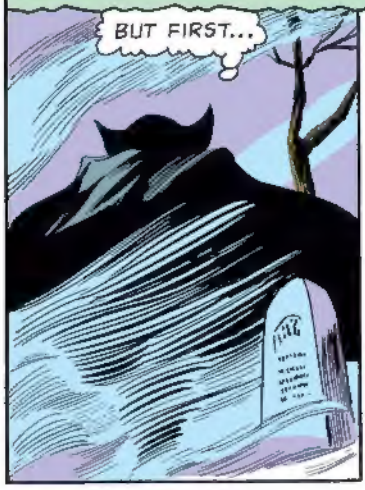
I MUST FIND OUT!
BUT FIRST--I SHALL ATTEND TO YOU, MY MUTE COMPANION.
I'LL NO LONGER NEED THE BLOOD WHICH YOU ALONE COULD GIVE ME IN THOSE DEMON LANDS.

BUT TO MAKE SURE YOU'LL BE ON HAND IF I NEED YOU--I'LL BURY YOU ALIVE IN THIS COFFIN!
FOR, UNTIL I LEARN WHAT YEAR THIS IS, I MUST CONSERVE MY SUPPLIES.

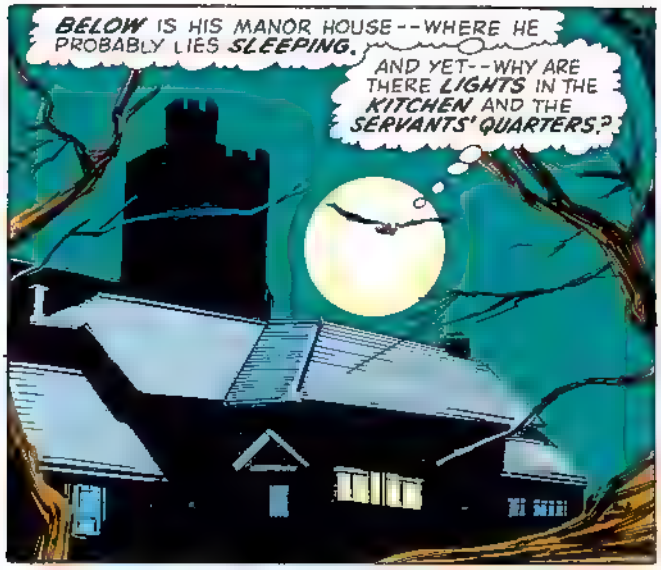

YOU ARE STRONG, TAJ--BUT ONLY MY MUSCLES CAN RAISE THIS LID UNAIDED!
SO HERE YOU'LL STAY UNTIL MY VAMPIRE HUNGER HAS A NEED FOR YOU--OR, SUFFOCATING... YOU DIE!!

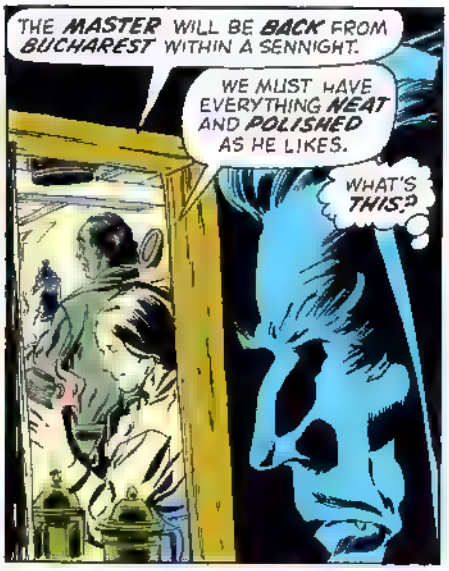


HIGH ABOVE--THE AUTUMN MOON! BELOW--THE SWIRL OF A CLOAK, THE SUBDUED GROWL OF THE HUNGRY VAMPIRE! AND THEN THE MAN-SHAPE SHRINKS--BECOMES SMALLER--UNTIL AT LAST ONLY THE LEATHERY FLAP OF BEATING BATWINGS BREAK THE SILENCE OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN NIGHT...

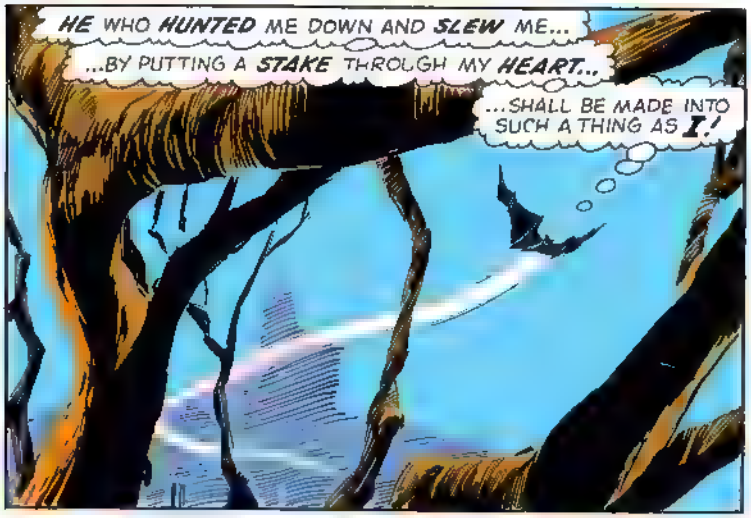


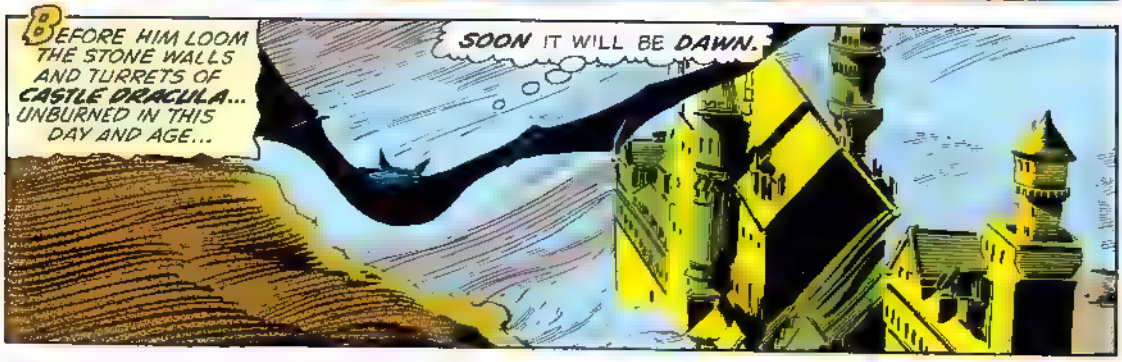
OUTWARD AND UPWARD FLIES THE ENORMOUS BAT, SEEKING ITS PREY...
I THOUGHT I HEARD-- BUT IT CANNOT BE!
BARON VAN HELSING SLEW THE VAMPIRE. MY FATHER SAW THE DEED DONE.
AHHHH, NO!
DEAR LORD-- FROM VAMPIRES AND WERE-WOLVES AND ALL OTHER CREATURES OF THE NIGHT--
PROTECT ME!
IT'S--GONE!
IT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN AN ORDINARY BAT. NO--
NO--VAMPIRE!
BUT THEN--AT A BEND IN THE ROAD...
AAAAAA-GHH!
THAT SCREAM IS MUFFLED--AS WICKED FANGS GLEAM IN THE MOONLIGHT...
AND WHEN THE VAMPIRE HAS FEASTED...
NOW TO ATTEND TO ABRAHAM VAN HELSING!


BELOW IS HIS MANOR HOUSE--WHERE HE PROBABLY LIES SLEEPING.
AND YET--WHY ARE THERE LIGHTS IN THE KITCHEN AND THE SERVANTS' QUARTERS?


THE MASTER WILL BE BACK FROM BUCHAREST WITHIN A SENNIGHT.
WE MUST HAVE EVERYTHING NEAT AND POLISHED AS HE LIKES.
WHAT'S THIS?

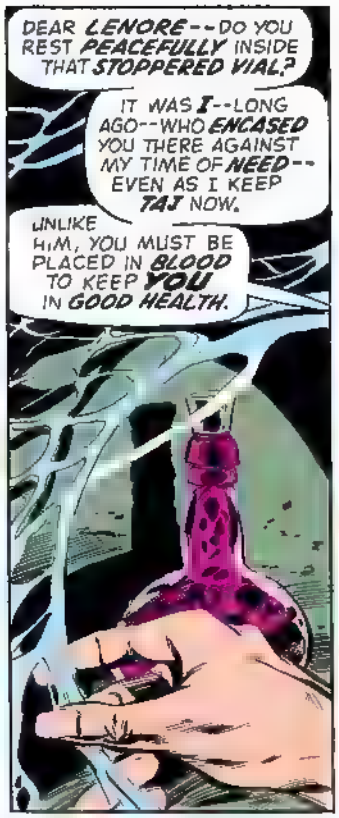
HE'S NOT IN RESIDENCE. AH, WELL...
...I CAN WAIT A WEEK. BUT THEN...


HE WHO HUNTED ME DOWN AND SLEW ME...
...BY PUTTING A STAKE THROUGH MY HEART...
...SHALL BE MADE INTO SUCH A THING AS I!


BEFORE HIM LOOM THE STONE WALLS AND TURRETS OF CASTLE DRACULA... UNBURNED IN THIS DAY AND AGE...
SOON IT WILL BE DAWN.

I MUST SEEK OUT MY COFFIN AND LIE IN IT BEFORE THOSE FIRST RAYS OF THE SUN TOUCH ME
OR ELSE MY BODY WILL TURN TO ASHES!

AS HE MAKES HIS WAY TOWARD THE SUBTERRANEAN CRYPTS BELOW THE CASTLE, DRACULA PAUSES...
THE BOTTLE OF BLOOD!
AHHH, I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT THAT--AND WHAT IS IMPRISONED IN THAT DUSTY GLASS.


DEAR LENORE--DO YOU REST PEACEFULLY INSIDE THAT STOPPERED VIAL?
IT WAS I--LONG AGO--WHO ENCASED YOU THERE AGAINST MY TIME OF NEED--EVEN AS I KEEP TAJ NOW.
UNLIKE HIM, YOU MUST BE PLACED IN BLOOD TO KEEP YOU IN GOOD HEALTH.

SOMETIME I MAY NEED YOU, BUT RIGHT NOW...
I MUST SEEK MY COFFIN!
IT WILL BE DAYBREAK WITHIN MINUTES.

HOW GOOD IT WILL BE TO LIE HERE AND DREAM, AFTER ALL I'VE BEEN THROUGH.
AND PLAN THE DEATH OF THAT HATED ENEMY OF MINE, VAN HELSING.

THE SUN RISES. A NEW DAY DAWNS. A DAY OF HORROR THAT HERALDS THE COMING OF NIGHTMARISH DAYS AND NIGHTS FOR THE SIMPLE FOLK OF THIS TRANSYLVANIAN HILL COUNTRY...
LITTLE ORA--DEAD OF THE VAMPIRE BITE!
HEAVEN HELP US IF COUNT DRACULA STILL STALKS THIS HAUNTED LAND!

FEARFUL TOWNSPEOPLE GATHER AT THE MARKET PLACE...

ORA--MURDERED!

WHO KNOWS HOW MANY OTHERS OF OUR VILLAGE MAY DIE BY THOSE SAME FANGS?

I SAY--WE MUST MARCH AGAINST HIS CASTLE AND SLAY HIM!

BUT, AS SOMETIMES HAPPEN WHEN PASSIONS RUN HIGH, THE LONG DAY PASSES WHILE ARGUMENTS RAGE BACK AND FORTH.

DARE WE DO THIS DEED--ON OUR OWN?

BETTER TO WAIT FOR BARON VAN HELSING TO RETURN, I SAY.

AYE! HE'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO!

LET HIM GIVE THE WORD, LET HIS BE THE RESPONSIBILITY.

...UNTIL IT IS ALMOST DUSK WHEN THE PEOPLE FINALLY GATHER THEIR COURAGE, AND...

WE WON'T WAIT, THEN.

NO--FOR THE BARON WON'T BE HOME FOR ANOTHER WEEK.

WE'LL GO--TO KILL DRACULA NOW.

...UNTIL MOONLIGHT TOUCHES THE FANGED FACE OF THE VAMPIRE COUNT...

IT IS NIGHT ONCE AGAIN--NIGHT WHICH GIVES ME LIFE! I SHALL GO FORTH TO SATE MY HUNGER ON THE WORLD OF LIVING MEN.

HA! HA! HA! HA! MY FOOD--HAS COME TO ME!

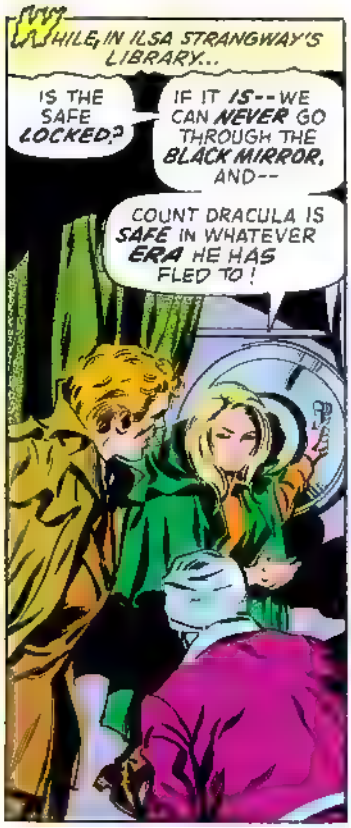
NO NEED FOR ME TO HUNT AT ALL--JUST TAKE THAT WHICH I CRAVE--AND LET THE OTHERS GO FOR ANOTHER TIME.

FOOLS! BACK TO YOUR BURROWS.
THINK YOU TO MATCH YOUR STRENGTHS AGAINST MY OWN?
YOU EXIST ONLY TO SERVE ME, YOUR MASTER!

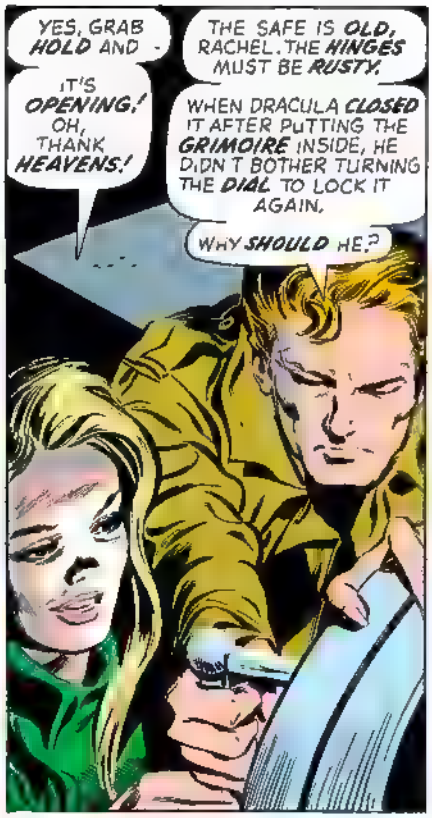
HE RAVENS LIKE A MAD THING AMONG THESE TERRIFIED PEOPLE...
YOU HAVE NO LIFE BUT THAT WHICH I PERMIT YOU.
ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT, ANIMALS!
AND AS FOR ABRAHAM VAN HELSING--YOU'LL GET NO HELP FROM HIM.
FOR HIM--I MEAN TO SLAY!

IN MIGHTY HANDS, SCREAMING FARMERS AND TERRIFIED SHEEPHERDERS ARE HELD HELPLESS UNTIL THE VAMPIRE TEETH HAVE BITTEN DEEP...

AND WHEN HE HAS DONE...
THESE ARE MY HILLS, NOW.
AND EVERY LIVING THING WITHIN THEM--MINE!
THE PEOPLE ARE MINE TO SLAY, MINE TO LET LIVE--AS IT PLEASES ME!

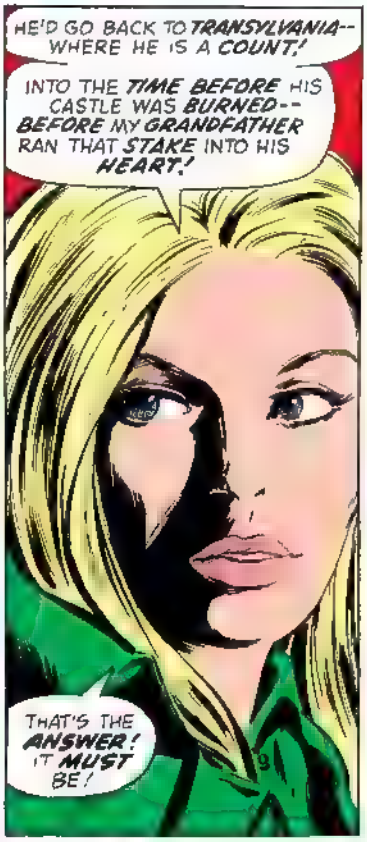

WHILE, IN ILSA STRANGWAY'S LIBRARY...
IS THE SAFE LOCKED?
IF IT IS--WE CAN NEVER GO THROUGH THE BLACK MIRROR, AND--
COUNT DRACULA IS SAFE IN WHATEVER ERA HE HAS FLED TO!

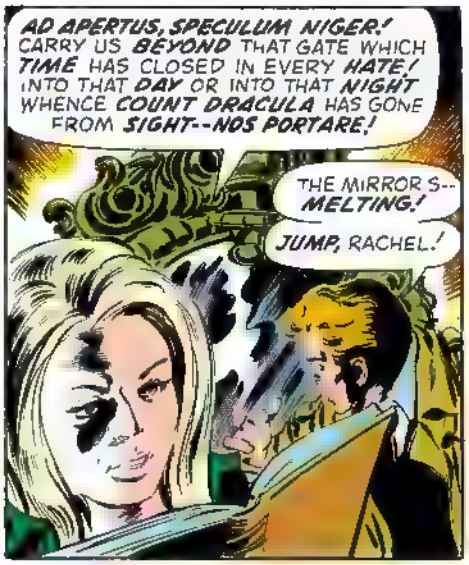
IT WON'T OPEN!
OH, FRANK--WHAT SHALL WE DO?
TRY AGAIN, RACHEL--PULL HARDER. HERE LET ME HELP.

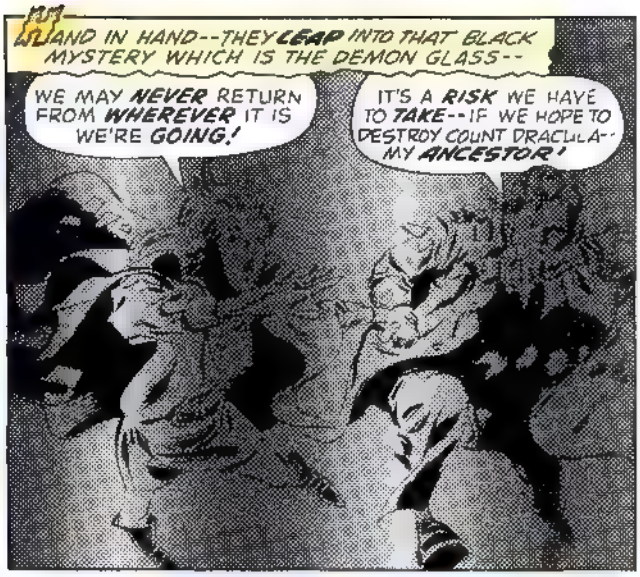

YES, GRAB HOLD AND -
IT'S OPENING! OH, THANK HEAVENS!
THE SAFE IS OLD, RACHEL. THE HINGES MUST BE RUSTY.
WHEN DRACULA CLOSED IT AFTER PUTTING THE GRIMOIRE INSIDE, HE DIDN'T BOTHER TURNING THE DIAL TO LOCK IT AGAIN.
WHY SHOULD HE?

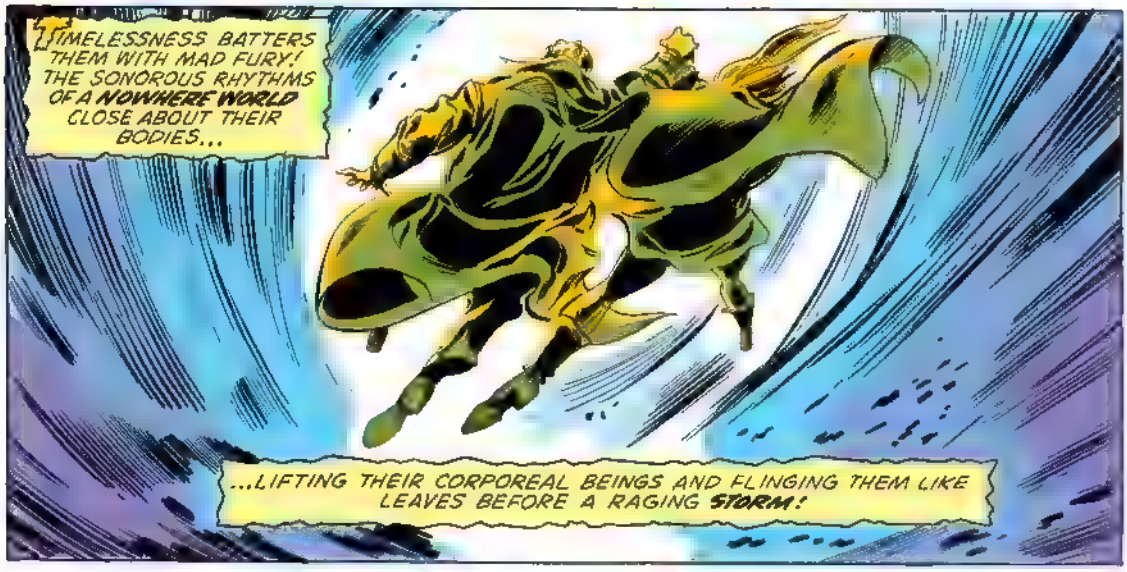
YES, YES. I SEE IT NOW. THE INCANTATION FIXES THE TIME AND PLACE INTO WHICH THE BLACK MIRROR OPENS.
WHY, THIS MEANS -WE CAN PICK AND CHOOSE WHEN AND WHERE WE WANT TO GO!

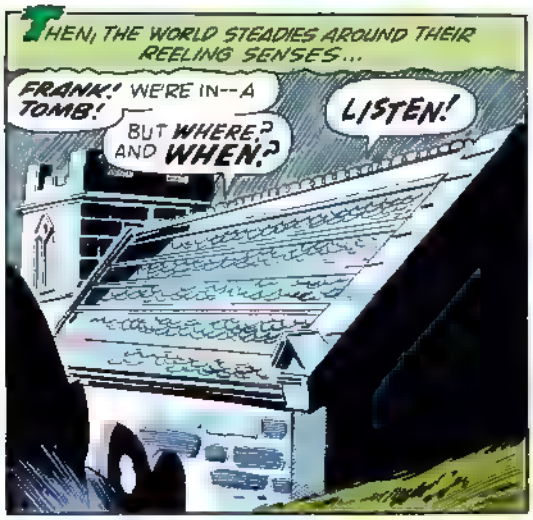
IT WON'T DO US ANY GOOD TO GO INTO THE DEMON WORLD.
WE'D BE DESTROYED.
NO, WE MUST THINK THIS OUT--DECIDE WHERE COUNT DRACULA WOULD GO--ASSUMING HE ESCAPED THOSE DEMONIAC BEINGS.
BUT--WHERE WOULD THAT BE?
WAIT! I--THINK I KNOW--!

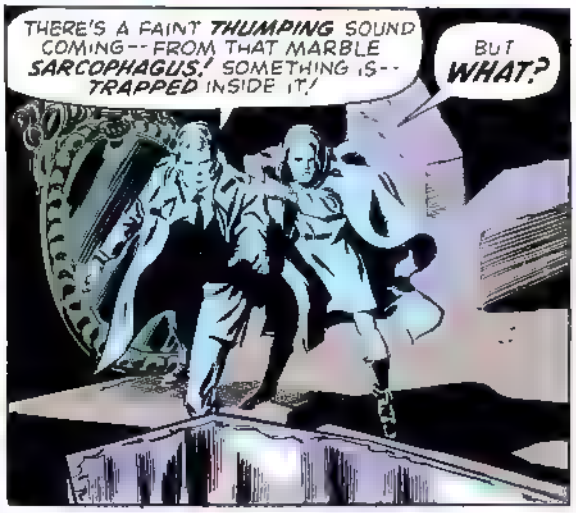

HE'D GO BACK TO TRANSYLVANIA--WHERE HE IS A COUNT!
INTO THE TIME BEFORE HIS CASTLE WAS BURNED--BEFORE MY GRANDFATHER RAN THAT STAKE INTO HIS HEART!
THAT'S THE ANSWER! IT MUST BE!


AD APERTUS, SPECULUM NIGER! CARRY US BEYOND THAT GATE WHICH TIME HAS CLOSED IN EVERY HATE! INTO THAT DAY OR INTO THAT NIGHT WHENCE COUNT DRACULA HAS GONE FROM SIGHT--NOS PORTARE!
THE MIRROR S--MELTING!
JUMP, RACHEL!

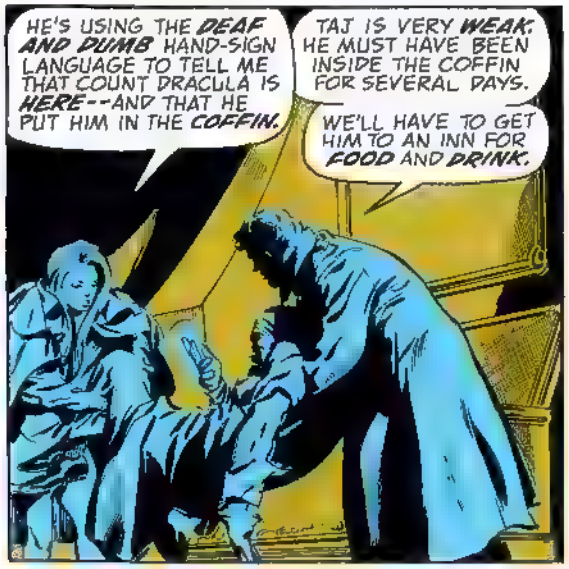

AND IN HAND--THEY LEAP INTO THAT BLACK MYSTERY WHICH IS THE DEMON GLASS--
WE MAY NEVER RETURN FROM WHEREVER IT IS WE'RE GOING!
IT'S A RISK WE HAVE TO TAKE--IF WE HOPE TO DESTROY COUNT DRACULA--MY ANCESTOR!

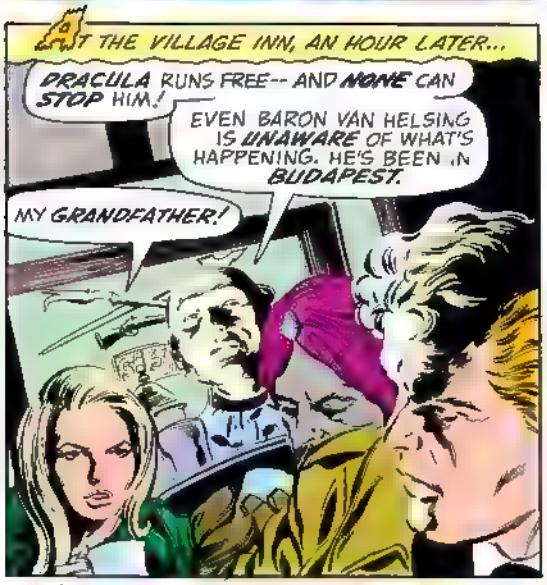

TIMELESSNESS BATTERS THEM WITH MAD FURY! THE SONOROUS RHYTHMS OF A NOWHERE WORLD CLOSE ABOUT THEIR BODIES...
...LIFTING THEIR CORPOREAL BEINGS AND FLINGING THEM LIKE LEAVES BEFORE A RAGING STORM!


THEN, THE WORLD STEADIES AROUND THEIR REELING SENSES...
FRANK! WE'RE IN--A TOMB!
BUT WHERE? AND WHEN?
LISTEN!

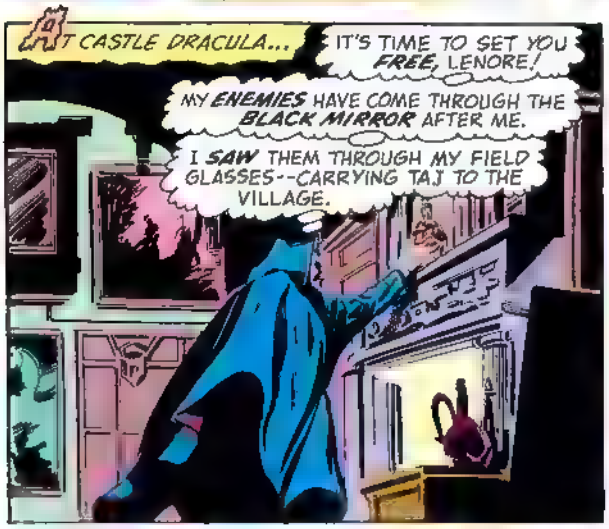

THERE'S A FAINT THUMPING SOUND COMING--FROM THAT MARBLE SARCOPHAGUS! SOMETHING IS--TRAPPED INSIDE IT!
BUT WHAT?

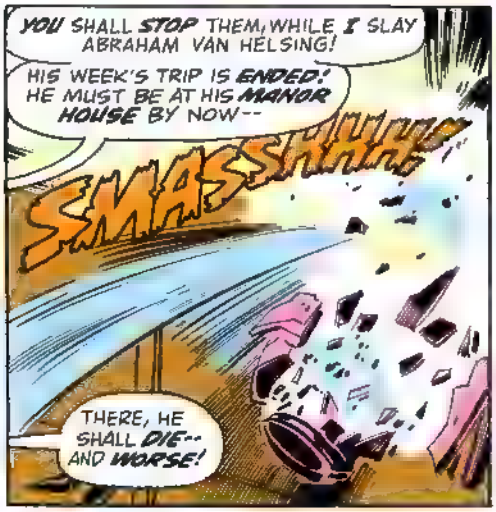
GIVE ME A HAND WITH THIS, RACHEL!
WHATEVER'S INSIDE THIS THING --IS ALSO HELPING MOVE IT!
WHY-- IT'S TAJ!


HE'S USING THE DEAF AND DUMB HAND-SIGN LANGUAGE TO TELL ME THAT COUNT DRACULA IS HERE--AND THAT HE PUT HIM IN THE COFFIN.
TAJ IS VERY WEAK. HE MUST HAVE BEEN INSIDE THE COFFIN FOR SEVERAL DAYS.
WE'LL HAVE TO GET HIM TO AN INN FOR FOOD AND DRINK.

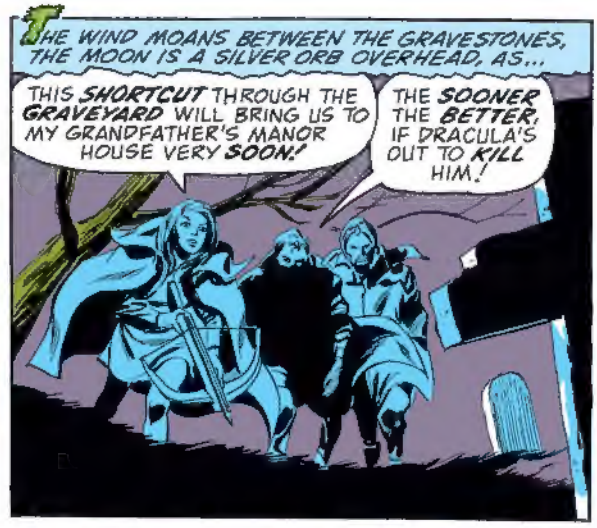

AT THE VILLAGE INN, AN HOUR LATER...
DRACULA RUNS FREE-- AND NONE CAN STOP HIM!
EVEN BARON VAN HELSING IS UNAWARE OF WHAT'S HAPPENING. HE'S BEEN IN BUDAPEST.
MY GRANDFATHER!

COUNT DRACULA WILL TRY TO KILL HIM, FRANK. AFTER ALL, IT WAS GRANDFATHER WHO RAN THAT STAKE INTO HIS HEART!
WE'LL HURRY TO HIS MANOR HOUSE--WARN HIM!

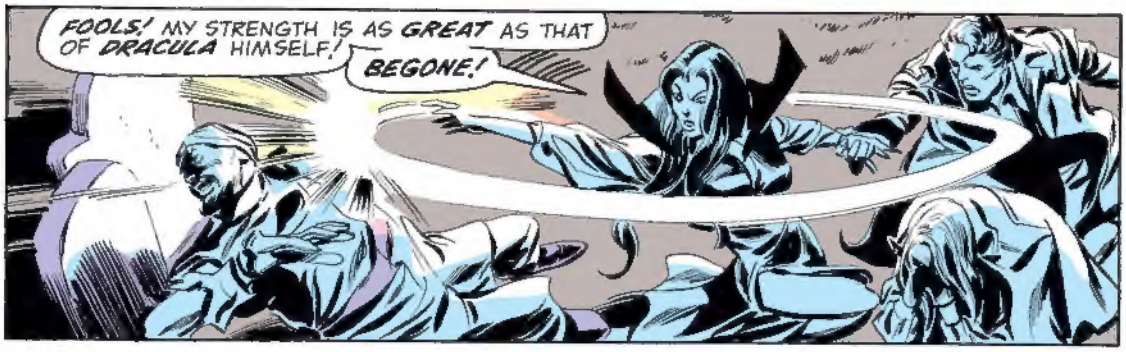

AT CASTLE DRACULA...
IT'S TIME TO SET YOU FREE, LENORE!
MY ENEMIES HAVE COME THROUGH THE BLACK MIRROR AFTER ME.
I SAW THEM THROUGH MY FIELD GLASSES--CARRYING TAJ TO THE VILLAGE.


YOU SHALL STOP THEM, WHILE I SLAY ABRAHAM VAN HELSING!
HIS WEEK'S TRIP IS ENDED! HE MUST BE AT HIS MANOR HOUSE BY NOW--
SMASHING
THERE, HE SHALL DIE-- AND WORSE!

THEN, FROM OUT THE SHATTERED BOTTLE, A SENSUOUS FORM WRITHES--AND GROWS--UNTIL THERE STANDS BEFORE DRACULA --LENORE!
GO AFTER THEM. THEY--BELONG TO YOU!
I CARE NOT WHAT I DO--SO LONG AS I CAN SATISFY MY HUNGER, COUNT DRACULA!
THOUGH I IMPRISONED YOU CENTURIES AGO--YOU ARE AS MUCH A VAMPIRE AS I!


THE WIND MOANS BETWEEN THE GRAVESTONES, THE MOON IS A SILVER ORB OVERHEAD, AS...
THIS SHORTCUT THROUGH THE GRAVEYARD WILL BRING US TO MY GRANDFATHER'S MANOR HOUSE VERY SOON!
THE SOONER THE BETTER, IF DRACULA'S OUT TO KILL HIM!

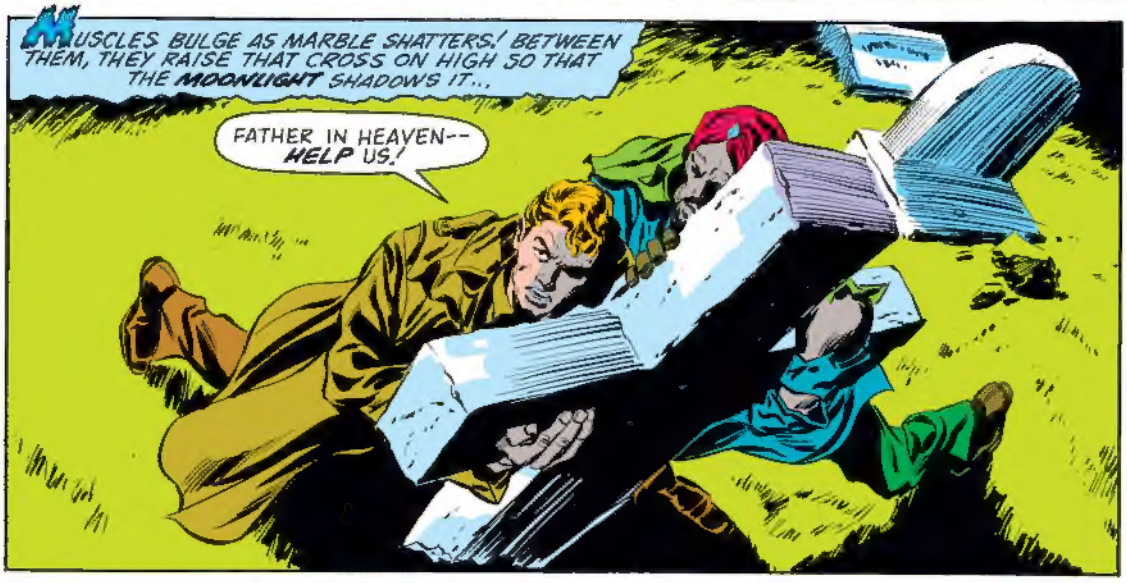
WITH A HISS OF VAMPIRE HUNGER--LENORE SPRINGS--!
THIS IS MY PREY, THIS SOFT FEMALE FLESH!
AWAY, YOU OTHERS!
TAJ--STOP HER!


FOOLS! MY STRENGTH IS AS GREAT AS THAT OF DRACULA HIMSELF!
BEGONE!

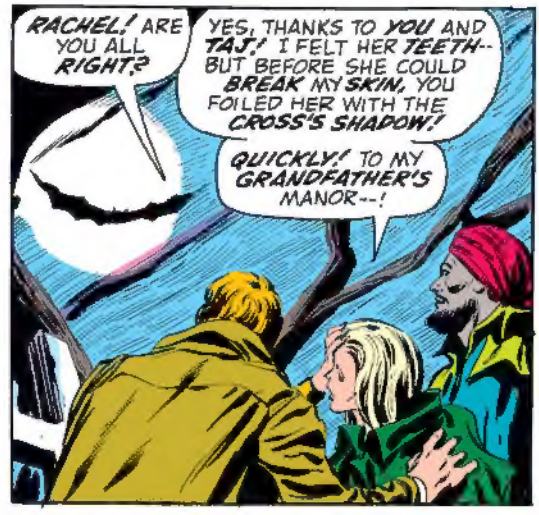
YOUR SENSES SWIM! YOU ARE ALMOST UNCONSCIOUS!
FALL--AND WAIT FOR THE TOUCH OF MY FANGS, RASH ONE!

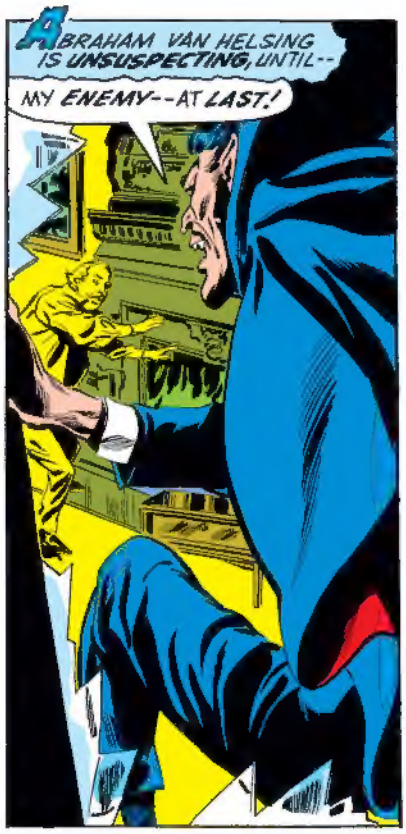
AND NOW--I FEAST! I WHO HAVE NOT SATED MY HUNGER FOR LIVING BLOOD IN MANY YEARS--SHALL DRINK MY FILL!

BREAK THIS MARBLE CROSS, TAJ!
IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE TO SAVE RACHEL.
THE MARBLE IS CRACKED! IT SHOULD GIVE WAY...
IT MUST!


MUSCLES BULGE AS MARBLE SHATTERS! BETWEEN THEM, THEY RAISE THAT CROSS ON HIGH SO THAT THE MOONLIGHT SHADOWS IT...
FATHER IN HEAVEN--HELP US!

AAAAAGHHH!


RACHEL! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES, THANKS TO YOU AND TAJ! I FELT HER TEETH--BUT BEFORE SHE COULD BREAK MY SKIN, YOU FOILED HER WITH THE CROSS'S SHADOW!
QUICKLY! TO MY GRANDFATHER'S MANOR--!

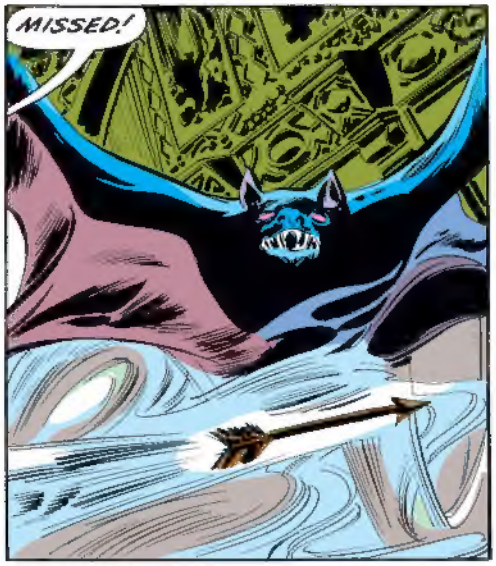

ABRAHAM VAN HELSING IS UNSUSPECTING, UNTIL--
MY ENEMY--AT LAST!

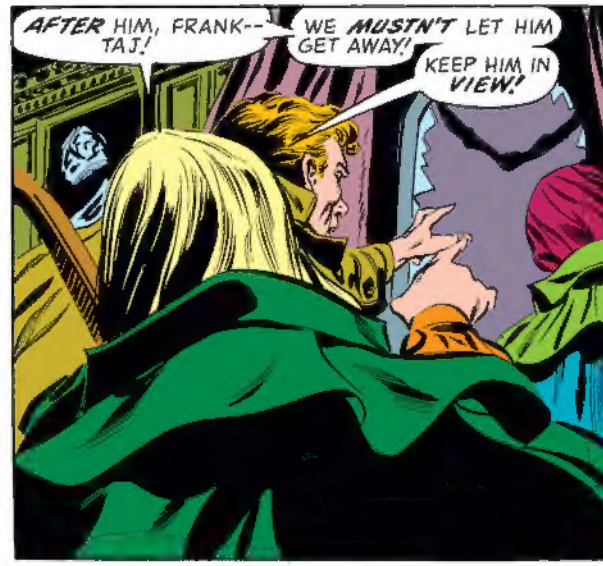
COUNT DRACULA!
BUT--I DESTROYED YOU! I--
I'VE LONGED FOR THIS MOMENT--LIVED FOR IT, VAN HELSING! NOW--NOTHING CAN STOP ME FROM FEASTING ON YOUR VERY LIFE!

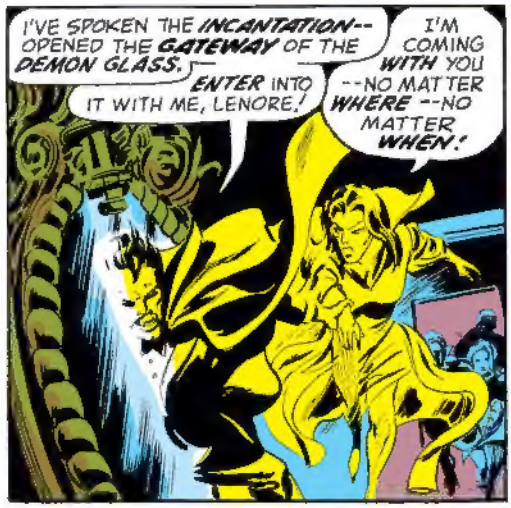
WE CAN STOP YOU, DRACULA!
LET HIM GO!
YOU!) THEN LENORE FAILED IN HER MISSION!
BUT MY STRENGTH IS TOO GREAT EVEN FOR THE THREE OF YOU!

NO, EVIL ONE--NOT ANY LONGER!
FOR, THIS BOW WHICH WE BORROWED FROM A VILLAGE HUNTER, IS NOTCHED AN ARROW OF WHITE THORN WOOD!
WHITE THORN WOOD--WHEN DRIVEN INTO A VAMPIRE'S HEART--DESTROYS IT UTTERLY.

NOW DIE, COUNT DRACULA!







NEXT:
MYSTERY OF THE MOORLANDS MONSTER!
BE HERE, HOB-GOBLIN!